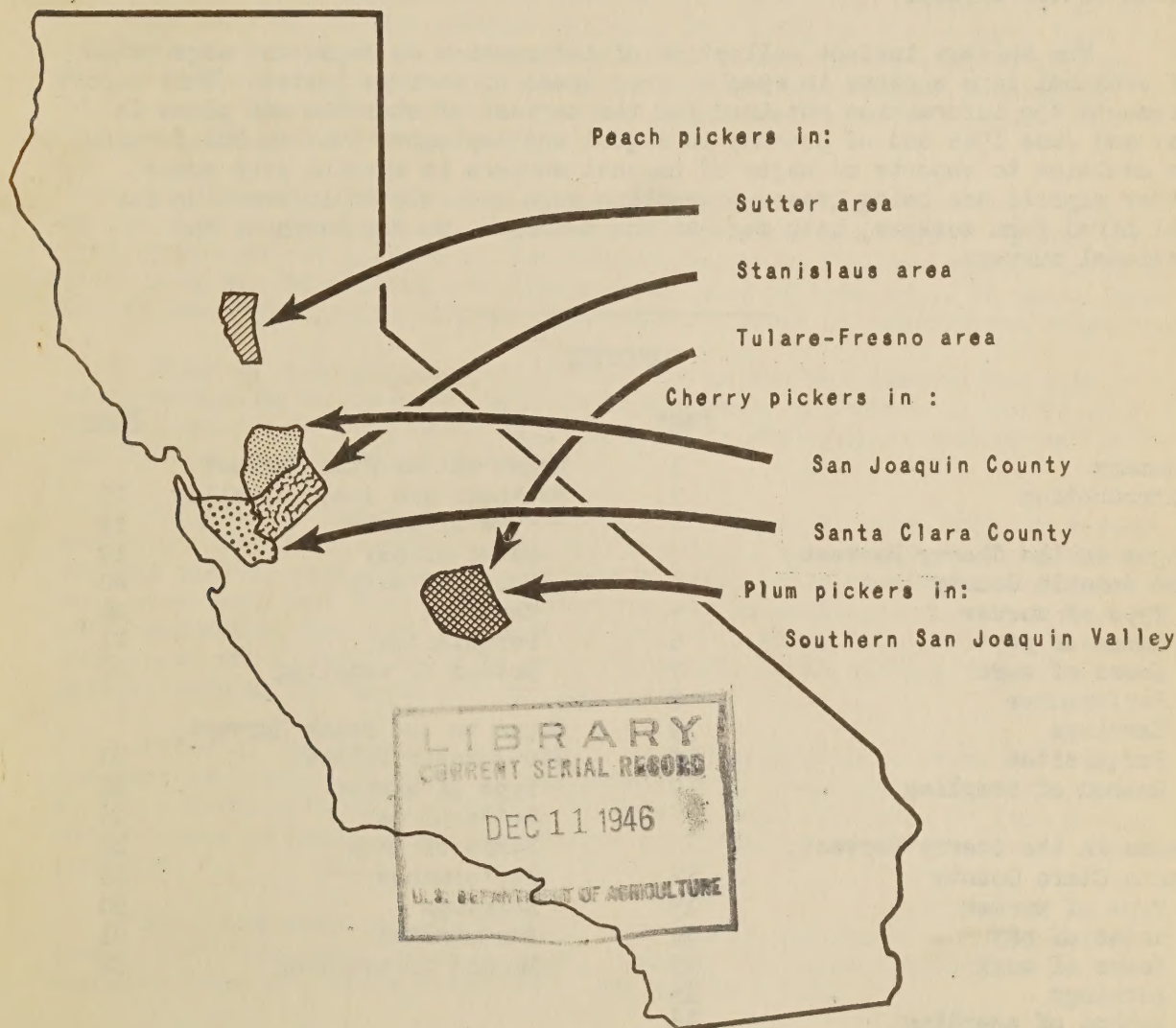


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Bureau of Agricultural Economics

WAGES AND WAGE RATES OF SEASONAL FARM WORKERS IN THE HARVEST  
OF SELECTED DECIDUOUS FRUITS, CALIFORNIA,  
MAY - SEPT. 1945



Surveys of Wages and Wage rates in Agriculture, Report Number 12

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## PREFATORY NOTE

This is the twelfth of a series of reports by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, presenting results secured from enumerative sample surveys of farm wages and farm wage rates. The surveys were planned and conducted by a Bureau-wide wage project committee, with Louis J. Ducoff as chairman, under the general direction of Conrad Taeuber, Office of the Chief. Members of the committee are: Glen T. Barton, Emerson M. Brooks, Charles F. Cannell, Charles A. Gibbons, Margaret Jarman Hagood, Roger F. Hale, Earl E. Houseman, Barbara B. Reagan. The State Agricultural Statisticians cooperated in conducting the field operations of the surveys.

The surveys include collection of information on wages and wage rates of seasonal farm workers in special crop areas of various States. This report presents the information obtained for the harvest of cherries and plums in May and June 1945 and of peaches in August and September 1945 in California. In addition to reports on wages of harvest workers in special crop areas, other reports are being issued presenting wage and related information for all hired farm workers, both regular and seasonal, on the basis of the national surveys.

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Prepared by William H. Metzler. Special acknowledgment is made to George Scott, State Agricultural Statistician, and to Catherine Senf and Wynne Rowlands of his staff for supervising the field work.



WAGES AND WAGE RATES OF FARM WORKERS IN  
SELECTED DECIDUOUS FRUIT HARVESTS,  
CALIFORNIA, MAY-SEPTEMBER 1945.

SUMMARY

Deciduous fruit operations in California are highly standardized, yet wide variations were found to exist in type of workers and wages earned.

The type of worker employed varied more largely with area than with any other factor. Local Mexican workers were particularly numerous in the southern part of the San Joaquin Valley. Over half of the working force in the plum harvest in Fresno and Tulare Counties were local Mexican workers and 40 percent were white workers of non-Mexican extraction. Composition of the picking force for freestone peaches in the same area two months later was very similar.

In the central part of the State, however, harvest crews were largely composed of migratory white workers of non-Mexican extraction. Eighty percent of the cherry pickers in San Joaquin County and two-thirds of the peach pickers in the Stanislaus and Sutter areas were of this type. In Santa Clara County the workers were largely local white workers of non-Mexican extraction.

Wives of such migratory white workers in the San Joaquin and Sutter areas worked in the orchards with their husbands, but women in the Fresno-Tulare, Stanislaus and Santa Clara areas were employed in cutting and packing but not in orchard operations.

Methods and rates of payment varied according to crop, type of worker and area. When fruit required careful handling, such as plums and peaches for the market, growers paid on an hourly basis. When speed and labor costs were more important than careful handling, as in picking cannery peaches or cutting peaches, the work was usually done on a piece rate basis. In case both speed and careful handling were important, as in picking cherries, some growers paid on one basis and some on another.

Rates of pay in the plum harvest varied according to area. Part of the industry is located in southern California, where wage rates are lower than in the central part of the State. The most common wage rate in Kern County was 70 cents an hour, whereas in Tulare and Fresno Counties it was 85 cents per hour.

The usual work day was 9 hours, but hourly employees worked somewhat longer than those paid by piece rate, Mexican Nationals somewhat longer than domestic laborers, and men somewhat longer than women.

In operations paid for at piece rates, there was great variation in earnings among individual workers doing the same type of work. Among cherry pickers in San Joaquin County one adult picker earned only 15 cents an hour, and another earned \$2.40. Yet the average earnings per worker were 97 cents per hour, in both San Joaquin and Santa Clara Counties. In San Joaquin County, payment was on a piece rate basis and in Santa Clara it was on an hourly basis.

Area differences were important. Hourly earnings in the Fresno-Tulare area averaged 84 cents both in the plum and peach harvests; in Kern County they were 73 cents for picking plums. In Stanislaus County peach pickers averaged \$1.24 an hour and in the Sutter area \$1.17.

Wages in operations employing women and children were notably lower. Cherry packers in Santa Clara County earned an average of 69 cents an hour, peach cutters in Stanislaus County 70 cents, and in the Sutter area 60 cents.



## INTRODUCTION

California ordinarily produces approximately 40 percent of the deciduous fruits grown in the nation. This includes more than 90 percent of the apricots and figs and almost that proportion of the grapes and prunes. It produces more than one-third of the peaches, pears and plums and smaller proportions of the cherries and apples.

Production of these crops is generally concentrated in small areas where soil and climatic conditions are particularly favorable. Commercial acreages in California of some of the chief deciduous fruit crops are located as follows: Figs - Four-fifths in Fresno and Merced Counties; Apples - Two-thirds in Sonoma and Santa Cruz Counties; Cherries - Two-thirds in San Joaquin and Santa Clara Counties; Cling Peaches - Two-thirds in Sutter and Stanislaus Counties; Raisin Grapes - Over half in Fresno County; Prunes - Almost half in Santa Clara County. The other deciduous fruits in California are scattered somewhat more widely.

The annual harvest season for California deciduous fruits starts with harvest of cherries in San Joaquin and Santa Clara Counties. This ordinarily occurs around the latter part of May and is followed closely by the plum harvest in Fresno and Tulare Counties. The third major crop to be harvested is apricots, starting in June and ending in July. Early peaches also are harvested for the market in June, but the commercial canning and drying varieties ripen during the early part of August. The peak of the pear harvest occurs at about the same time as for peaches. In the latter part of August grapes, figs and prunes are ready for harvest. The season closes with the gathering of apples in the Santa Cruz area in October and November and the harvesting of Emperor grapes in Tulare County in December.

The result of local specialization and differences in harvest periods is that a large migratory labor force is required that will move from crop to crop as each matures. Operations for each crop have been highly standardized, the size of field boxes is usually uniform, and wage rates from one orchard to another are quite comparable. During the war period when the supply of laborers was quite short, some growers started offering unusually high wage rates in order to attract labor, but federal wage ceilings tended to restore the uniformity of wage rates from one orchard to another.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics made special studies of wages and earnings in the harvest of three of the major deciduous fruit crops during 1945. Wages in the cherry harvest were surveyed in San Joaquin and Santa Clara Counties during the latter part of May and first part of June, in the plum harvest in Fresno and Tulare Counties during the middle of June, and in the picking of peaches in Fresno, Tulare, Stanislaus, Sutter and Yuba Counties during August and September.



WAGES IN THE CHERRY HARVEST,  
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,  
MAY 22 - JUNE 7, 1945.

San Joaquin is the leading county in California in the production of cherries. The report of the San Joaquin County Agricultural Commissioner indicates that 18,475 tons, valued at \$5,583,373, were produced in 1945. These were produced on 4,102 acres, 1,558 in Bing cherries, 1,041 in Royal Annes, 827 in Tartarians and the balance largely in Lamberts, Chapmans, and Black Republicans.

The 1945 season was abnormal in that cool weather had delayed ripening of the cherries for two weeks. Growers reported spotty yields. Some growers had full crops of from six to eight tons to the acre, while others had yields only half of normal.

According to reports of the Farm Labor Project of the Agricultural Extension Service, the season started slowly around the first of May and moved into full operation by the last of the month (table 1).

Table 1.--Number of workers engaged in the cherry harvest and percentage of completion, week by week, 1945. 1/

Week ended	:	Number of workers engaged in harvest	:	Percentage of completion
May 5		50		0
May 12		50		1
May 19		1,000		15
May 26		5,000		35
June 2		6,000		40
June 9		6,000		75
June 16		5,000		90
June 23		5,000		99

1/ Source: "California Weekly Farm Labor Reports," Agricultural Extension Service Farm Labor Project, May - June 1945.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics' survey was made during the period from May 22 to June 7, as the harvest season was moving into its peak. At that time picking of the Tartarians was coming to a close, that of Bings was at its peak and picking of the Royal Annes had just begun.

Cherries are ordinarily picked into 14-quart buckets and then emptied into field boxes. Pickers usually work from ladders, sometimes as tall as 40 feet, but a few of the cherries can be picked from the ground. Each picker has a card in which a punch mark is made each time he empties a bucket of cherries in the field boxes on the truck row. The checking may either be done by the crew boss, by a foreman employed by the operator, or by the

operator himself. When more than one member of a family is working, they usually have their buckets punched on the same card. Some growers pay their workers in cash at the end of each day, as this practice seems to please a good many of the pickers. Others pay once a week, or at the request of the worker.

Pickers work in loosely organized crews. Some of these crews are recruited each morning in the rooming house area of Stockton. The labor contractor relying upon such workers may have to recruit practically a new crew each morning. Most of the pickers, however, are migratory white workers of non-Mexican extraction who live in camps maintained by either the labor contractor or grower, or have trailers or other housing of their own. If workers find the rate of pay, yield of fruit, size of the trees, or other conditions are not to their liking, they ask for their pay and go elsewhere.

Practically all the 1945 crop in San Joaquin County was purchased on the trees by cherry buyers. Some had their own picking crews, but for the most part they relied on labor contractors - actually labor scouts - to secure their workers for them.

Type of worker.--The survey covered 54 crews composed of 801 workers, an average of slightly under 15 members per crew. Of these, 650 were white workers of non-Mexican extraction, mostly migratory, 34 were Negroes, 77 were local workers of Mexican extraction, 26 Filipinos and 14 imported Mexican Nationals, (table 2).

Table 2.--Type of worker engaged in cherry picking, by race, nationality, sex and age, San Joaquin County, California, May 22 - June 7, 1945.

Race, nationality and sex	All workers		Age 1/		
	Number	Percent	Under 18	18-44	45-over
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number
All workers	801	100	32	654	103
White, non-Mexican extraction	650	81	32	531	87
Male	492	61	20	398	74
Female	158	20	12	133	13
Local Mexican	77	10	-	65	12
Male	75	9	-	63	12
Female	2	1	-	2	-
Mexican National					
Male	14	2	-	14	-
Filipino					
Male	26	3	-	14	-
Negro	34	4	-	30	4
Male	26	3	-	22	4
Female	8	1	-	8	-

1/ Data as to age of some workers incomplete.



Four-fifths of the workers were males, the balance usually were wives or daughters of pickers. Women ordinarily picked the smaller trees or the lower branches of tall trees, while the men were using 18-, 20-, 24-, 32-, or 40-foot ladders to pick out the tops.

Cherry picking ordinarily is done by able-bodied adults. Only 20 of the male and 12 of the female workers were under 18 years of age, and less than one-fifth of the men and one-tenth of the women were over 45.

Rate of pay.—A federal wage ceiling rate for cherry picking of 4 cents a pound or 90 cents an hour was in effect in San Joaquin County. Both workers and growers believed that the 90-cent rate was too low. Some growers also claimed that the 4-cent a pound rate was also too low and that some operators were paying above it.

Actually there was considerable flexibility in the rates paid, in spite of the ceiling. This was largely owing to the fact that most growers followed the traditional system of paying by the bucket rather than by the pound (table 3). Most growers interpreted the 4-cent a pound ceiling rate as 80 cents a bucket, reasoning that the 14-quart picking bucket held an average of 20 pounds. Some pointed out, however, that their fruit was small and the buckets were only averaging from 17 to 18 pounds, yet they had to pay 80 cents to hold their pickers. Three operators, however, were paying less than 80 cents for a 14-quart bucket and one grower was paying less than 80 cents for a 16-quart bucket. He stated that those buckets hold only 20 pounds of cherries. At the other extreme, one operator was paying 80 cents for a 12-quart bucket and another claimed that many of his 14-quart buckets weighed as much as 25 pounds. Others pointed out that they were paying slightly above the scale because they had a light yield of cherries.

Table 3.—Wage rates of workers engaged in cherry picking, San Joaquin County, California, May 22 - June 7, 1945.

Unit	Rate per unit	Number and percent of crews paid at each rate	
		Number	Percent
Total		54	100
<u>Bucket</u>			
16-quart	\$1.00	1	2
"	.80	8	15
"	.70	1	2
14-quart	.80	22	40
"	.75	2	4
"	.70	1	2
12-quart	.80	1	2
"	.70	1	2
14- and 16-quart	.80 and 1.00, res.	1	2
" "	.80	3	6
14-quart	.80 and 1.00	1	2
<u>Pound</u>	.04	12	22



Some workers incorrectly interpreted the ceiling rate as a minimum rate. They watched the rates of pay very critically and were ready to quit without warning if they believed the grower was paying less than the "government" rate.

Hours of work.—Records for individual crews were taken for only one day's work during the enumeration period. On the day of enumeration 11 of the crews worked 8 hours; 2 worked 8.5; 11 worked 9 hours; 3, 9.5; and 20, 10 hours. Few workers failed to work a full day. The average work-day of all workers was 9.4 hours (table 4). Pickers of Bing cherries worked an average of 9.2 hours a day; of Royal Annes, 9.6; and Tartarians, 9.8. This difference apparently is associated with the relative perishability of the different varieties. Tartarians have to be picked quite rapidly after starting to ripen, while the Bings keep longest.

Table 4.—Average hours per day, performance and earnings of cherry pickers by variety, yield, height of tree and type of worker, San Joaquin County, California, May 22 - June 7, 1945.

Variety, yield, height of tree, type of worker	: Number : pickers : reported : on	: Average: : hours : worked : per day	Buckets		: Average	
			: picked 1/ : Per	: Per	: Per	: Per
			hour	day	hour	day
All Cherries 2/	801	9.4	1.25	11.7	\$ .97	\$ 9.10
<u>Variety</u>						
Bing	382	9.2	1.21	11.1	.97	8.90
Tartarian	178	9.8	1.11	11.2	.91	8.90
Royal Anne 2/	115	9.6	1.34	12.8	1.06	10.30
Mixed 3/	126	9.2	1.08	9.9	.89	8.10
<u>Yield 4/</u>						
Under 3 tons per acre	371	8.9	1.20	10.8	.92	8.30
3.0 - 3.9 tons per acre	200	10.0	1.19	11.8	.93	9.25
4 tons per acre and over	228	9.5	1.36	13.0	1.06	10.15
<u>Height of Tree</u>						
Short	145	9.4	1.31	12.3	1.06	10.00
Medium	191	9.5	1.35	12.8	1.07	10.20
Tall	360	9.4	1.15	10.8	.91	8.60
<u>Type of worker 5/</u>						
White, non-Mexican extraction	650	9.6	1.19	11.4	.97	9.30
Local Mexican	77	9.2	.99	9.1	.80	7.40
Mexican National	14	10.0	1.42	14.2	1.20	12.00
Filipino	26	9.3	1.68	15.6	1.34	12.40
Negro	34	8.8	1.16	10.2	.94	8.30

1/ Reduced to 14-quart buckets.

2/ The number of reports in the sample on picking Royal Annes was approximately 50 percent of the normal proportion to be expected for this variety. Hence in obtaining averages for hours worked, performance and earnings for pickers of all varieties of cherries, data on workers picking Royal Anne cherries were weighted twice as heavily as those on other workers.

3/ Usually small acreages of Bings and Royal Annes.

4/ Yield this picking.

5/ Separate data not compiled for age and sex groups since a large number of women and children had their buckets punched on the same card with the head of the family.



Performance.—As pickers belonging to the same family usually had their buckets punched on the same card, performance data could not be obtained on a strictly individual basis. For those individuals for whom separate data were available, however, performance was highly variable. The range of performance for adult male workers was from 2 buckets to 30 buckets in a 10-hour day. Performance of members of one crew ranged from 2 buckets to 15 buckets. One crew of pickers averaged 19 buckets per 10-hour day, while another averaged 7 buckets though both were picking Bing cherries in orchards with an estimated yield of 3 tons to the acre. Such extremes, however, were uncommon and most pickers made from 9 to 14 buckets a day.

The greatest difference in output among workers was due to differences in skill. However, three other factors were highly important: first, the variety of cherries; second, the yield, and third, the height of the trees.

Workers averaged 1.34 buckets per hour of Royal Anne cherries, 1.21 of Bings, and 1.11 of Tartarians (table 4). These differences may be partially related to variations in yield, as the average yield for Royal Anne cherries was 4.4 tons per acre compared to 4.1 for Tartarians, and 3.0 for Bings (table 3).

Growers were asked to estimate the yield of their trees for the particular picking when the survey was made. The estimates ranged from 1 to 10 tons to the acre, the average being 3.4 tons. They were also asked to state the most common length of ladder they were using. The range was from 8-foot ladders to 40-foot extension ladders. Many growers gave a range of ladder sizes rather than specifying any particular length. Thirty of the 48 growers who replied used extension ladders, but a number of these used them on only a few trees. Most of the extension ladders were 32 feet. An estimate of tree size was worked out from the type of ladder used.

Determination of performance on the basis of yield and height of the tree was highly complex. These two variables were interrelated as the larger the tree, the heavier the production per acre to be expected. In some orchards the trees are more than 40 feet tall and are still not heavily loaded when yielding 8 tons to the acre. From the pickers' standpoint, the most significant factor is the yield per square foot of bearing surface. Next to that is the fact that placement of 32-foot extension ladders is a much longer and more difficult process than setting up 10- or 12-foot tripod ladders. The height factor was further complicated by the practice of allowing the women and children to pick from the short ladders, while the head of the family used the longer one to pick from the tops of the trees.

When yield is taken separately, the average output of pickers was 1.36 buckets per hour on trees that yielded over 4 tons to the acre compared to 1.20 buckets on trees yielding less than 4 tons. Pickers on short and medium-sized trees, picking either from the ground or from 8-, 10-, 12- or 14-foot ladders, averaged 1.31 buckets per hour compared with 1.35 buckets on trees requiring 16-, 18- or 20-foot ladders. The average output of a worker was 1.15 buckets per hour on trees requiring the use of an extension ladder.



Some growers with tall trees indicated that the pickers had refused to pick the cherries at the top of the tree for the ceiling rate.

A combination of all these factors can be observed in an examination of the output of various types of workers. The 26 Filipino workers had the highest performance rate, averaging 1.7 buckets per hour, and the Mexican National crew was second with 1.4 buckets per hour. Members of both groups were relatively young and able-bodied men. Both groups were also helped by good picking conditions. The Mexican Nationals were picking Tartarians from 12- and 14-foot ladders in an orchard with a 5-ton yield. Seventeen of the Filipino pickers were picking Bings from 8- to 18-foot ladders in an orchard with an 8-ton yield. On the other hand, the orchards worked in by local crews of Mexican extraction had average yields ranging from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  tons to the acre and averaging  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tons to the acre. Part of the white workers of non-Mexican extraction and Negro crews were women. Differentials in performance according to sex could not be ascertained.

Earnings.--As can be judged from the figures on output, the earnings of cherry pickers for whom individual information was obtained were highly variable. The slowest individual worker earned \$1.50 in a 10-hour day and the fastest \$24.00. Earnings also varied from crew to crew. The slowest crew averaged \$5.20 per worker in a 10-hour day, and the fastest \$17.00 in a 9-hour day. Both crews were picking Bing cherries, the former in an orchard with large trees and a 3-ton yield, the latter in one with smaller trees and the same yield.

Workers picking Royal Anne cherries had somewhat higher earnings than those picking Bings or Tartarians (table 4). This was to be expected as the yield of Royal Anne cherries is ordinarily heavier than of the other varieties and the fruit is more likely to hang in clusters.

Average earnings per hour ranged from 92 cents per hour in orchards yielding under 3 tons per acre to \$1.06 in those yielding over 4 tons. According to height of tree, earnings varied from 91 cents to \$1.07 per hour.

As indicated by the performance data, Filipino and Mexican National workers had relatively high earnings. The Filipinos earned an average of \$1.34 an hour and \$12.40 a day, while the Mexican Nationals earned \$1.20 an hour and \$12.00 a day. These returns are quite high compared with those of the local pickers of Mexican extraction, who picked on the poorer orchards, earning 80 cents an hour and \$7.40 a day. The white workers of non-Mexican extraction and Negro crews earned close to the average for all pickers in the survey.

Average earnings of all workers in the harvest are estimated at 97 cents an hour or \$9.13 for a 9.4-hour day. In arriving at this average, data for workers picking Royal Anne cherries were multiplied by two so as to give them their representation based on this variety's proportion of the total cherry acreage in the county.

Slightly less than a third of the pickers earned under 80 cents an hour. A similar proportion earned from 80 cents to \$1.00 per hour, and 37

percent earned \$1.00 an hour or more (table 5). On a daily basis, 38 percent earned less than \$7.50. Somewhat less than one-third earned from \$7.50 to \$9.99. One-third earned over \$10.00 per day.

Table 5.—Amounts earned by cherry pickers per hour and per day, San Joaquin County, California, May 22 - June 7, 1945.

Earnings	: Number and percent of workers earning	
	each amount	
	Number	Percent
<u>Per hour</u>	801	100
Under \$.80	255	32
\$.80 - .99	247	31
\$1.00 and over	299	37
<u>Per day</u>	801	100
Under \$7.50	304	38
\$7.50 - 9.99	244	30
\$10.00 and over	253	32

Perquisites.—A few operators furnished their workers camping space and others furnished transportation. It is not common, however, for cherry operators to furnish anything except ladders and buckets. The few Mexican Nationals engaged in the harvest were supplied with lodging and transportation.

Method of sampling.—Cherries in San Joaquin County are grown in about 400 orchards scattered over an area of nearly 300 square miles north and east of Stockton. With the help of the County Agricultural Commissioner, the cherry producing area was delineated on maps and divided into 52 segments having approximately equal acreages of cherries (averaging 80 acres). Enumerators were instructed to obtain information on one day's work for the first crew encountered in each segment and if this crew had less than 16 workers to get a second crew in the segment. A few segments had no crews working, either because the orchards had already been picked out or would not be ready to pick during the period of the survey.

Information was obtained from 54 crews in 49 segments spaced over the 12-day period. A check of sample schedules indicates satisfactory representation geographically but underrepresentation of pickers on Royal Anne cherries. This resulted from a reduction of the number of enumerators in the latter part of the survey period, when this variety was at peak harvest. As indicated in the tables, corrections for this underrepresentation have been made in obtaining the over-all average time worked and earnings for the area. This correction is based on the following comparison of man-days of cherry picking work covered in the survey, with 1945 bearing acres by varieties:



<u>Variety</u>	<u>Man-days</u>	<u>1945 Bearing Acres</u>
Bing	382	1,558
Tartarian	178	827
Royal Anne	113	1,041
Mixed	126	-
Other	-	676
Total	799	4,102

No corrections were made in the frequency distributions of hourly and daily earnings.

WAGES IN THE CHERRY HARVEST,  
SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
MAY 28 - JUNE 2, 1945

Cherries in Santa Clara County ripen a week or two after those in San Joaquin County. There is a small movement of workers from the San Joaquin area for this harvest, but most of the picking is done by local labor. According to the California Cooperative Crop Reporting Service, there were 2,593 acres of cherries in Santa Clara County in 1944, largely Royal Anne, Tartarian, and Bing varieties.

Though the 1945 crop was late, yields were good and the labor supply adequate. Officials of the Agricultural Extension Service Farm Labor Project estimate that the number of workers employed in the harvest was largest toward the end of June, when the late varieties were being harvested (table 6).

Table 6.--Number of workers engaged in the cherry harvest and percentage of completion, week by week, 1945. 1/

Week ended	: Number workers : engaged in harvest	: Percentage : of completion
May 26	750	0
June 2	1,000	2/
June 9	1,200	2/
June 16	3,000	2/
June 23	3,500	75
June 30	3,700	90
July 7	2,000	99

1/ Source: "California Weekly Farm Labor Reports," Agricultural Extension Service Farm Labor Project; May - June 1945.

2/ Percentage not given.

Approximately two out of three of these workers were engaged in picking cherries, and the balance in packing, sorting, nailing, hauling, and other jobs associated with the harvest.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics survey of farm wages was made at the early part of the season and covered the period from May 28 to June 2. At that time the Tartarian and other early market varieties were being handled. Harvesting of Royal Anne, Bing and other late varieties was not covered.

Cherry growers in this county generally manage their own picking and packing operations, therefore both operations were covered by the survey. The same workers may come back to them year after year or the operators may hire their workers through the same foreman or labor contractor. In this way, an expert and dependable force of cherry pickers has been built up.



Type of worker.—The survey covered all hired workers engaged in harvest operations. Included among the workers were 252 pickers, 105 packers, 2 sorters, 2 nailers, 6 truck drivers and loaders, 5 foremen and 8 forewomen, a total of 386.

The pickers were largely skilled Italian and Czech workers from the San Jose area. There were 199 of these and they were supplemented by 20 local Mexicans, 6 Mexican Nationals and 6 Negroes (table 7).

Table 7.—Workers engaged in the cherry harvest, by operation performed, race, nationality, sex and age, Santa Clara County, California, May 28 - June 2, 1945.

Operation, race and nationality	Total workers		Sex		Age		
	Number	Percent	Male	Female	Under 18	18-44	45-over
	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
<u>Picking</u>							
All pickers	252	100	236 2/	3 2/	7 2/	203 2/	29 2/
White, non-Mexican extraction	199	79	196	3	6	166	27
Local Mexican	20	8	20	-	1	17	2
Mexican National	6	2	6	-	-	6	-
Negro	6	2	6	-	-	6	-
Unclassified 1/	21	8	8	-	-	8	-
<u>Packing</u>							
All packers	105	100	-	105	5 2/	49 2/	17 2/
<u>Sorting</u>							
White, non-Mexican extraction	2	100	-	2	-	2	-
<u>Nailing</u>							
White, non-Mexican extraction	8	100	7	1	2/	2/	2/
<u>Truck driving</u>							
White, non-Mexican extraction	4	67	4	-	2/	2/	2/
Local Mexican	2	33	2	-	2/	2/	2/
<u>Foremen</u>							
White, non-Mexican extraction	5	100	5	-	2/	2/	2/
<u>Forewomen</u>							
White, non-Mexican extraction	8	100	-	8	2/	2/	2/

1/ 21 pickers not classified according to nationality.

2/ Data as to sex or age of some workers incomplete.

Women in this area did less field work than the wives of the migratory workers who move up and down the San Joaquin Valley. Only 3 of the pickers were women, but all of the packing was done by women.

Most of the workers were from 18 to 44 years of age. Only a few of the pickers were under 18 years old, but a significant proportion were over 45.

Rates of pay.—The maximum rates of pay permitted by the WFA wage stabilization orders were \$1.00 an hour or 4 cents per pound. Of the 252 pickers, 231 were paid at the \$1.00 per hour rate (table 8). The other workers were paid either a lower hourly rate or 4 cents a pound. The lowest hourly rate was 70 cents.

Table 8.—Wage rates of workers engaged in the cherry harvest, Santa Clara County, California, May 28 - June 2, 1945.

Operation and rate of pay	Number and percent of workers paid at this rate	
	Number	Percent
<u>Picking</u>		
All workers	252	100
\$1.00 per hour	231	92
.85 per hour	1	1/
.80 per hour	1	1/
.70 per hour	4	2
.04 per pound	15	6
<u>Packing</u>		
All workers	116 2/	100
\$0.35 per box (Campbell lugs)	53	45
.25 per box (Calex lugs)	37	32
.70 per hour	22	19
.80 per hour	1	1
1.00 per hour	3	3
<u>Sorting</u>		
\$.85 per hour	2	100
<u>Nailing</u>		
\$1.00 per hour	8	100
<u>Hauling</u>		
\$1.00 per hour	6	100
<u>Supervisors and foremen</u>		
All workers	5	100
\$1.25 per hour	4	80
1.00 per hour	1	20
<u>Forewomen</u>		
All workers	8	100
\$1.25 per hour	1	12
1.00 per hour	7	88

1/ Less than 0.5 percent.

2/ Some packers were paid at two piece rates hence this figure exceeds the total number of packers shown in table 5.



Sorters were paid 85 cents an hour, nailers \$1.00, and truck drivers and foremen \$1.25. Cherry growers were inclined to look on these wages as low and sympathized with their workers over the low pay scales established under the wage ceiling regulations.

Packing work, done entirely by women, was paid at lower rates. Packers were paid at three different rates. Those who packed from a moving belt usually received 70 cents an hour; piece rates for packing the Campbell lugs were 35 cents each and for packing the Callex lugs were 25 cents. The forewomen in the packing sheds were ordinarily paid \$1.00 an hour.

Hours of work.—The average working day for the cherry pickers was 9.5 hours, though some crews worked 11 hours. Nailers and foremen worked long hours, 11.2 per day for the nailers and 10.7 for the foremen (table 9). Working hours for the packers were quite irregular. They could not go to work in the morning until fruit was brought in from the orchard for them to pack, then they might be without fruit to pack several times in the day.

Coordination of the activities of all workers engaged in the harvest requires a good deal of planning. It is not uncommon for packers to run out of fruit if there are relatively few pickers or if the hauling from the orchard to the shed is not done expeditiously. One packing crew in the survey averaged only 2.5 hours of work a day.

Earnings.—As a few pickers were paid less than \$1.00 an hour, the average wage of all pickers paid on an hourly basis was 99 cents. Their average earnings per day were \$9.40. Among the workers who were paid 4-cents a pound, one crew was composed of experts who averaged \$1.25 an hour. Two other crews paid piece rates were composed of "learners" and averaged only 49 cents an hour and \$4.60 a day. The smaller earnings of these "learners" brought the average returns to all pickers down to 97 cents an hour and \$9.20 a day (table 9).

Table 9.—Hours and earnings of workers engaged in the cherry harvest, Santa Clara County, California, May 28 - June 2, 1945.

Operation	: Number of		: Hours worked		: Average earnings	
	: workers	:	: per day	:	: Per hour	: Per day
All workers	378 $\frac{1}{2}$		8.6		\$ .90	\$7.70
Picking	252		9.5		.97	9.20
Packing	97 $\frac{1}{2}$		5.7 $\frac{1}{2}$		.69 $\frac{1}{2}$	3.90

$\frac{1}{2}$  Data on daily earnings covered 97 packers, on hourly earnings, 31.

Cherry packers, all women, earned an average of \$3.90 a day. The average was held down by a number of crews which worked only 2 or 3 hours a day. Packers on whom hourly data were available earned an average of 69 cents an hour.

Most cherry pickers were paid \$1.00 an hour and their daily earnings generally ran between \$9.00 and \$10.00. A total of 31 percent earned less than \$9.00 (table 10). Some of these were learners paid at piece rates and the rest were workers who worked parts of days, bringing their average for the survey week to less than 9 hours. More than half the workers earned from \$9.00 to \$10.25 per day, and only 17 percent earned over \$10.25. Their work-day generally averaged from 10.5 to 11 hours.

Table 10.--Daily earnings of cherry pickers, Santa Clara County, California, May 28 - June 2, 1945.

Earnings	: Number and percent of workers earning specified amounts	
	: Number	: Percent
Workers reporting	252	100
Under \$9.00	78	31
\$9.00 - 10.24	131	52
\$10.25 and over	43	17

Method of sampling.--A list was compiled of 88 growers whose cherry production was over 1,000 lugs in 1944. These growers produced about 85 percent of the 1944 crop and employed a still higher proportion of the hired labor as the smaller growers depended to a large extent on family labor. The list of growers was divided into two groups according to size of operation and then further subdivided into three groups according to whether the growers were located in the San Jose-Campbell, Mountain View-Sunnyvale, or Berryessa districts. An effort was made to sample every fifth grower from each size-location group.



WAGES IN THE PLUM HARVEST, SOUTHERN  
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA,  
JUNE 10 - 23, 1945.

Plum production is expanding rapidly in California. The major producing area is in Placer County which has over 9,000 acres in this crop. However, the major expansion is occurring in the Fresno-Tulare-Kern County area of the Southern San Joaquin Valley. By 1944, this area had 5,750 acres in plum production, and 2,400 additional acres will come into bearing within a few years. 1/

There are numerous varieties of plums, of which the Santa Rosa is now the most important. Ripening of the different varieties occurs over a period of several weeks and gives a needed spread to the harvest season. Plums are color-picked for shipment to eastern markets. They must be picked at just the right time so as not to become overripe.

Picking operations are most frequently handled by the shippers, although some growers conduct these operations themselves. Three pickings are ordinarily made, although the number varies somewhat with the variety and yield. Plum picking requires considerable care. The fruit is easily bruised and in-expert handling of ladders and buckets may break off numerous fruit spurs. As plums frequently hang in clusters, care not to remove the green with the ripe fruit is necessary.

The 1945 season was several weeks late but otherwise normal. Growers had anticipated a light crop of Santa Rosa plums but they were uneven in ripening instead and the total yield was approximately normal. The labor supply was adequate but there was no surplus.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics survey was limited to the southern San Joaquin Valley production area - including Fresno, Tulare and Kern Counties. Production reaches its peak in Kern County about a week ahead of the two counties to the north. Hence the survey in Kern County relates to the week ended June 16 and in Fresno and Tulare Counties it relates to the week ended June 23.

The number of workers employed in the harvest in the area surveyed were estimated by officials of the Agricultural Extension Service Farm Labor Project to be as follows:

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1/ Data from N. P. Byrd, R. E. Blair, H. C. Phillips, "Increase Estimates California Fruit and Nut Crops as of 1944," California Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, June 1945.

Table 11.—Number of workers engaged in the plum harvest, and percentage of completion, Fresno, Tulare, and Kern Counties, California, 1945. 1/

Week ended	: All	: Fresno County		: Tulare County		: Kern County	
	: counties,	:	:	:	:	:	: Per-
	: workers	: Workers	: Percentage	: Workers	: Percentage	: Workers	: centage
	: employed	: employed	: complete	: employed	: complete	: employed	: employed
	Number	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
June 9	1,350	100	3	600	0	650	0
June 16	3,550	400	10	1,550	11	1,600	20
June 23	5,400	600	20	2,100	22	2,800	45
June 30	6,600	900	40	3,000	42	2,700	70
July 7	6,000	850	75	3,000	62	2,150	90
July 14	4,650	800	92	2,800	80	1,050	99
July 21	1,250	750	96	500	83	-	100
July 28	950	425	98	500	90	-	100
August 4	400	-	100	400	92	-	100

1/ Source: "California Weekly Farm Labor Reports," Agricultural Extension Service Farm Labor Project, June - August 1945.

Type of worker.—Because inept plum pickers might do a good deal of damage, no children were employed in this operation. The proportion of women was small, as women are usually engaged in packing instead of picking. Of 644 workers whose sex and race were reported, 71 were women (table 12).

Slightly more than half of the pickers surveyed were workers of Mexican origin who lived in Fresno, Visalia, Tulare, and other towns and cities in the area. Another 40 percent were white workers of non-Mexican extraction, and the remaining 8 percent were Mexican Nationals.

Table 12.—Workers engaged in plum picking, by nationality and sex, Southern San Joaquin Valley, California, June 10 - 23, 1945.

Nationality and sex	: All workers		: Number of workers		
	: Number	: Percent	: Fresno	: Tulare	: Kern
Total	808	100	268	295	245
White, non-Mexican extraction	253	40	31	182	40
Male	204	32	18	146	40
Female	49	8	13	36	-
Local Mexican	338	52	237	101	-
Male	316	49	220	96	-
Female	22	3	17	5	-
Mexican National	53	8	-	12	41
Unclassified <u>1/</u>	164	<u>2/</u>	-	-	164

1/ In Kern County 164 workers were not classified according to nationality and sex.

2/ Not computed in percentages.



Rates of pay.—Operators prefer to pay pickers on an hourly basis as this practice encourages more careful handling of the fruit. Only 16 of the 808 pickers were paid on a piece-rate basis. This rate was 25 cents a box.

Hourly rates of pay varied from one part of the producing area to another. In Kern County, a third of the workers were paid 70 cents per hour and the remainder 75 cents. In Tulare County, about half were paid 80 cents per hour and the others, 85 cents. In this county a crew of Mexican Nationals was paid 75 cents an hour per worker, but growers claimed this wage differential was justified as the Nationals received housing and transportation not supplied to the others. In Fresno County, over two-thirds of the workers were paid 85 cents per hour and the rest were paid 80 cents per hour (table 13).

Table 13.—Wage rates of workers engaged in picking plums, Southern San Joaquin Valley, California, June 10 - 23, 1945.

County and type of worker	: Total : Number of workers who were paid					
	: number of : an hourly rate of					
	: workers :	\$ .70	\$ .75	\$ .80	\$ .85	\$ .90
All workers	792	81	176	220	314	1
<u>Fresno County</u>						
All workers	268	-	-	83	185	-
White, non-Mexican extraction	31	-	-	28	3	-
Local Mexican	237	-	-	55	182	-
<u>Tulare County</u>						
All workers	279	-	12	137	129	1
White, non-Mexican extraction	166	-	-	79	86	1
Local Mexican	101	-	-	58	43	-
Mexican National	12	-	12	-	-	-
<u>Kern County</u>						
All workers	245	81	164	-	-	-
White, non-Mexican extraction	95	40	55	-	-	-
Local Mexican	54	-	54	-	-	-
Mexican National	96	41	55	-	-	-
	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent of workers paid above</u>				
		hourly rates				
All workers	100	10	22	28	39	1/
Fresno County	100	-	-	31	69	-
Tulare County	100	-	4	49	46	1/
Kern County	100	33	67	-	-	-

1/ Less than 0.5 percent.

These differences follow the common pattern of wage rate differentials in the State. Wage rates increase from south to north. They are lowest at the southern end where there are large reservoirs of Mexican labor and the harvest

season is comparatively long. In the San Francisco Bay area, wage rates are comparatively high both for industrial and agricultural labor. They are still higher at the northern end of the State, where labor supplies are comparatively low.

Hours of work.—The average work-day for all pickers was 9 hours (table 14). Mexican National workers averaged 9.6 hours and white workers of non-Mexican extraction, 8.4 hours.

The usual work-week was 6 days. However, some crews worked 7 days in the week and others only 4 or 5 days. Members of one crew averaged 10 hours a day and 66 hours in the week; members of another worked only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  days or 23 hours for the operator making the report. No attempt was made to ascertain the time worked by the surveyed workers in other farms.

In some crews that were employed for 6 or 7 days in the week, some workers put in no more than 3 or 4 days. Whether this represented turnover or absenteeism was not learned.

Table 14.—Average hours of work per day of plum pickers by county, sex and nationality, Southern San Joaquin Valley, California, June 10 - 23, 1945.

Type of worker	: Workers : Average hours of work per day :reporting:All counties: Fresno :Tulare: Kern				
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number
All workers	808	9.0	8.8	8.7	9.5
White, non-Mexican extraction	253	8.4	8.7	8.5	8.0
Male	204	8.4	8.6	8.5	8.0
Female	49	8.7	8.9	8.6	—
Local Mexican	338	8.8	8.8	8.9	—
Male	316	8.9	8.8	9.0	—
Female	22	8.1	7.9	8.5	—
Mexican National	53	9.6	—	10.0	9.5
Unclassified <u>1/</u>	164	—	—	—	10.0

1/ In Kern County 164 workers were not classified according to nationality and sex.

Earnings.—Earnings varied on the basis of local wage levels, length of work-day and type of worker. Average earnings were 73 cents an hour and \$6.95 a day in Kern County, 83 cents an hour and \$7.20 a day in Tulare County, and 84 cents an hour and \$7.40 in Fresno County (table 15). Mexican Nationals earned an average of 71 cents an hour and \$6.90 a day, the white workers of non-Mexican extraction 80 cents an hour and \$6.70 a day, and the local Mexicans 84 cents an hour and \$7.40 a day. These differentials between groups were affected by differences in wage levels between areas.



Table 15.—Average earnings per day of plum pickers by county, sex, and nationality, Southern San Joaquin Valley, California, June 10 - 23, 1945.

Type of worker		Average earnings per day			
		Workers	All	Fresno	Tulare
		reporting	counties		Kern
All workers	808	\$7.20	\$7.40	\$7.20	\$7.00
White, non-Mexican extraction	253	6.70	7.00	7.10	5.60
Male	204	6.70	6.90	7.10	5.60
Female	49	7.00	7.10	6.99	-
Local Mexican	338	7.40	7.40	7.30	-
Male	316	7.40	7.40	7.40	-
Female	22	6.80	6.80	6.80	-
Mexican National	53	6.90	-	7.50	9.70
Unclassified <u>1/</u>	164	-	-	-	7.50

1/ In Kern County 164 workers were not classified according to nationality and sex.

Over half of the workers had earnings of between \$7.00 and \$8.00 a day (table 16). The few that earned over that amount worked very long hours. Those that received less than \$7.00 usually worked in the lower wage rate areas, but in some cases worked parts of days instead of full time.

Table 16.—Amounts earned by plum pickers per hour and per day, Southern San Joaquin Valley, California, June 10 - 23, 1945.

Earnings	Workers earning specified amounts	
	Number	Percent
Workers reporting	808	100
<u>Per hour</u>		
\$ .70 - .79	257	32
.80 - .84	220	27
.85 and over	331	41
<u>Per day</u>		
Under \$7.00	271	34
7.00 - 7.99	444	55
8.00 and over	93	11

Perquisites.—Mexican National workers were furnished housing and transportation. A few of the other workers were furnished transportation but the number was small.

Method of sampling.—Plums in the San Joaquin Valley are raised by a large number of growers, but a relatively small number of grower-shippers handle the shipping of the crop. Most of the crop of independent growers is harvested by the shippers under various kinds of agreements with the growers. A few shippers act only as selling agents for the growers and have nothing to do with the labor used in harvesting the crop.

A complete list of shippers in the area was assembled with the help of the County Agricultural Commissioners. Preliminary to the determination of a sample, all 27 of these shippers were visited and information was obtained on the number of pickers employed by each and the percentage of their operations consisting of direct purchases of harvested fruit. At the same time, shippers were acquainted with plans for the survey and asked whether they would be willing to cooperate, if drawn in the sample. This involved furnishing payroll records on their own pickers and the names of independent growers from whom they expected to receive harvested fruit during the survey week.

A sample of 8 shippers was drawn in such manner as to give approximately proportional representation in each of the 3 counties. A few shippers who declined to cooperate in the survey were deliberately not drawn in the sample, although they were considered in determining the number of shippers to be included.

Enumerators were instructed to obtain information covering all workers harvesting plums handled by the specified shippers during the survey week. This required visits to a number of growers in addition to the specified 8 shippers, in cases where the harvest was handled by growers. To avoid excessive travel where a large number of small growers were involved, enumerators were permitted to cut off the list after including enough growers to account for 70 percent of the plums handled by the shipper during the survey week.



WAGES IN THE PEACH HARVEST,  
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA,  
AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1945

California produces about 40 percent of the peaches in the United States. Although most of the Nation's peaches are produced for home use or the fresh market, over half of those grown in California are canned, a quarter are dried, and only a sixth are sold fresh. Peaches produced for canning are usually of the clingstone variety, whereas those produced for eating or drying are freestones. Peach production is rather widely scattered over the State, but the largest producing areas are in the San Joaquin Valley. These areas include: first, the Sutter Basin in Sutter, Yuba and Butte Counties, where growers specialize in the production of clingstone peaches for canning; second, the Modesto-Hughson-Temple area in Stanislaus County, where clingstones for canning are the major product but freestones are produced also; and third, the Tulare-Fresno County area, which produces freestone peaches.

Harvest operations for the three types of peaches differ. Freestones for the fresh market are quite soft and watery and must be handled rapidly and carefully. They are also highly perishable and must be harvested as soon as mature enough for shipping. Trees are picked over a number of times in harvesting these. As peaches for drying do not have to meet the same rigid market standards, a picker can usually strip the trees in one picking. Little care needs to be exercised in regard to size, color or freedom from blemishes, when the peaches are to be dried.

The clingstone peach is comparatively firm and not easily bruised. It matures slowly on the tree, hence does not require as rapid handling as a freestone. The trees can be stripped in one picking unless the fruit ripens very unevenly.

The 1945 peach crop was reported by the California Cooperative Crop Reporting Service as above average in all three of the areas. In the first area the crop was of good quality and weather conditions during the harvesting season were quite favorable. Only two factors tended in any way to hamper the harvest. Deliveries to the canneries in the Sutter area were so heavy that growers had to be placed on a quota basis to prevent overloading the cannery facilities. Also, the supply of labor was so tight that growers were in constant fear of not being able to get enough workers to harvest their crops. However, the Agricultural Extension Service Farm Labor offices reported that actual shortages of labor were not great. In the Sutter area a shortage of 100 workers was reported through the major part of the season. A shortage of 150 workers was reported in the Tulare-Fresno area during the latter part of August, at the beginning of the raisin harvest.

The harvest season in the Tulare-Fresno area is somewhat earlier than in the other two areas. Weekly estimates made by the farm labor offices of the Agricultural Extension Service as to the number of workers employed and the stage of completion of the harvest in the three areas are as follows:

Table 17.—Number of workers engaged in the peach harvest and percentage of completion, week by week, Tulare-Fresno, Stanislaus, and Sutter Areas, California, 1945. 1/

Week ended	: Tulare-Fresno Area :		Stanislaus Area :		Sutter Area	
	: Workers :		: Workers :		: Workers :	
	: engaged in:		engaged in:		engaged in:	
	: harvest :		harvest :		harvest :	
		Percentage complete		Percentage complete		Percentage complete
June 16	500	2	-	-	-	-
June 23	950	3	-	-	-	-
June 30	750	6	-	-	-	-
July 7	950	10	-	-	-	-
July 14	1,400	15	-	-	-	-
July 21	1,200	18	100	0	-	-
July 28	3,125	20	300	2	60	0
August 4	3,800	25	600	5	1,720	5
August 11	5,250	35	1,000	10	1,975	10
August 18	4,560	50	4,000	25	3,375	20
August 25	5,550	60	6,000	50	6,200	50
September 1	5,760	75	3,000	75	6,100	75
September 8	4,700	85	6,000	90	5,400	90
September 15	2,800	92	4,000	97	1,800	98
September 22	1,750	97	-	100	-	100

1/ Data from "California Weekly Farm Labor Reports," issued by Farm Labor Office of the Agricultural Extension Service.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics survey was made in the Tulare-Fresno area for the week ending August 11, when the harvest there was 35 percent complete and employment was near the maximum. In the Stanislaus area the survey was made for the week ending August 25, as employment was approaching its peak. In the Sutter area the peak period had already passed before the survey was made, covering the week of August 26 - September 1, but operations were still close to capacity.

Type of worker.—The type of labor force in the three areas varied. In the Tulare-Fresno sector approximately 60 percent of the pickers were local Mexicans and 40 percent were white workers of non-Mexican extraction. Mexican Nationals accounted for only 2.4 percent of the entire group (table 18). Very few local Mexicans were employed in the Stanislaus area and none were obtained in the sample. Almost 70 percent of the pickers were white workers of non-Mexican extraction and 27.9 percent were Mexican Nationals. One crew of Jamaicans was obtained in the sample, giving them a representation roughly proportionate to their number in the local labor force.

In the Sutter area the proportion of the pickers that were white workers of non-Mexican extraction, amounted to almost 70 percent. The rest of the workers included Mexican Nationals, local Mexicans, Hindus, Negroes and prisoners of war.



Very few Mexican women engaged in picking, but there were 73 white women of non-Mexican extraction employed at this work in the Tulare-Fresno Area, 6 at Modesto and 203 in the Sutter Area.

Peach cutting is light but tedious work ordinarily performed by women and children. This operation consists in taking the peaches from the field boxes, cutting them in half, removing the pit, and placing the halves on a drying tray with the open side up. Of 103 peach cutters employed in the Tulare-Fresno Area all but two were women. These two were boys who probably handled trays as well as cut fruit. In the Sutter Area 26 workers were cutting peaches, 11 of them boys and the rest women and girls.

Table 18.—Type of workers engaged in the peach harvest by operation, by major producing area, California, August-September, 1945.

Operation and type of worker	: Tulare-Fresno :		Stainislaus :		Sutter	
	: area :		area :		area	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All workers	1,066	-	358	-	1,270	-
<u>Picking</u>						
All workers	885	100	354	100	1,089	100
White, non-Mexican extraction	340	38	247	70	760	69
Male	267	30	241	68	550	50
Female	73	8	6	2	210	19
Local Mexican	524	59	-	-	82	8
Male	521	59	-	-	76	7
Female	3	1/	-	-	6	1
Mexican Nationals	21	3	99	28	129	12
Nonwhite	-	-	8	2	99	9
Jamaican	-	-	8	2	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	99	9
Prisoners of war	-	-	-	-	19	2
<u>Cutting</u>						
All workers	103	100	-	-	24	100
Male (under 18)	2	2	-	-	11	46
Female	101	98	-	-	13	54
<u>Dry Yard Men</u>						
White, non-Mexican extraction	59	100	-	-	-	-
<u>Foremen</u>						
All workers	18	100	4	100	8	100
White, non-Mexican extraction	6	33	4	100	8	100
Local Mexican	12	67	-	-	-	-
<u>Load and Haul</u>						
All workers	1	100	-	-	149	100
White, non-Mexican extraction	1	100	-	-	143	96
Local Mexican	-	-	-	-	6	4

1/ Less than 0.5 percent.

Rates of pay.—Methods of payment varied both with type of worker and area. In the Tulare-Fresno district most of the workers were paid on an hourly basis. Peaches picked for the market must be selected carefully for color, size and freedom from defects. Payment on an hourly basis has been found more conducive to careful work than payment by the box.

Mexican Nationals were paid 75 cents an hour in this area, while other pickers were paid 80 and 85 cents per hour. Growers indicated that this wage differential was justified because they had to guarantee the Mexican National a minimum amount of employment, had to transport him to and from camp, provide housing, take care of his medical needs and render other types of service. Average pay per hour was practically the same for all groups of U. S. workers, including the local Mexicans.

In the Stanislaus area local and import Mexican pickers were ordinarily paid by the hour; while the other white workers picked by the box. The latter were ordinarily experienced pickers who could make much more at piece rates than by the hour.

In this area Mexican National workers were paid at the rate of 85 cents an hour, the same rate as for white workers of non-Mexican extraction who worked on an hourly basis. Most piece-rate workers were paid from 12 to 15 cents a box for picking, depending on the yield, age of the trees, and other factors. The most usual rate was 12 cents.

Only a few of the pickers in the Sutter area were paid on an hourly basis. These were largely Mexican Nationals and were generally paid 70 cents an hour. The base piece rate was 12 cents a box, the ceiling rate established by the specific wage ceiling order for this operation. Almost a third of the workers, however, were paid at piece rates ranging from 13 up to 25 cents. These rates were paid in orchards in which either the yields were light, the trees unusually tall, or other factors existed which reduced the output per day.

The rate of pay for workers such as truck drivers and loaders was generally \$1.00 an hour.

Peach cutters were paid on a piece rate basis in all areas. In the Tulare-Fresno area this rate was usually 15 cents a box, the range being from 14 to 16 cents. In the Sutter area only one operator was contacted who dried any peaches. He paid 12 cents a box for cutting.

Hours of work.—The usual working day for a peach picker in the Tulare-Fresno and Stanislaus areas was 9 hours. One crew of Mexican Nationals worked 9.9 hours and a few others worked from 8 to  $8\frac{1}{2}$  hours, but the general practice, both for hourly and piece-rate crews was to work 9 hours. The usual work week was 6 days. However, employment was somewhat irregular in this area, as the survey was made prior to the period of peak employment.



Table 19.—Wage rates of workers engaged in the peach harvest, by major producing area, California,-- August-- September 1945.

Operation and rate	Number and percent of workers paid each rate					
	Tulare-Fresno Area		Stanislaus Area		Sutter Area	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Picking</u>						
All workers	885	100	354	100	1,171	100
Hourly rate						
70 cents	-	-	-	-	99	8
75 cents	40	4	-	-	8	1
80 cents	248	28	-	-	-	-
85 cents	555	63	82	23	6	1/
95 cents	-	-	4	1	-	-
Rate per box						
12 cents	-	-	130	37	740	63
13 cents	27	3	79	22	43	4
14 cents	-	-	18	5	57	5
15 cents	-	-	41	12	152	13
17 cents	-	-	-	-	6	1/
18 cents	-	-	-	-	7	1
19 cents	-	-	-	-	21	2
20 cents	15	2	-	-	-	-
21 cents	-	-	-	-	21	2
25 cents	-	-	-	-	11	1
<u>Cutting</u>						
All workers	103	100	-	-	24	100
Rate per box						
12 cents	-	-	-	-	24	100
14 cents	16	15	-	-	-	-
15 cents	71	69	-	-	-	-
16 cents	16	16	-	-	-	-
<u>Dry Yard Men</u>						
All workers	59	100	-	-	-	-
Hourly rate						
75 cents	2	3	-	-	-	-
85 cents	36	61	-	-	-	-
90 cents	3	5	-	-	-	-
100 cents	18	31	-	-	-	-
<u>Foremen</u>						
All workers	18	100	4	100	8	100
Hourly rate						
85 cents	4	22	-	-	1	13
90 cents	6	33	-	-	-	-
100 cents	8	45	-	-	6	75
110 cents	-	-	1	25	-	-
125 cents	-	-	2	50	1	12
150 cents	-	-	1	25	-	-

1/ Less than 0.5 percent.

The work-day in the Sutter area was somewhat shorter than in the others, especially for piece-rate workers. White workers of non-Mexican extraction picking at piece rates worked an average of 7.4 hours a day, but local Mexican pickers worked 7.9 hours. Nonwhite pickers worked an average of 8.1 hours. Mexican Nationals paid on an hourly basis had an average work-day of 10.0 hours (table 20).

The shorter work-day in the Sutter area is associated with two circumstances. First, growers had to slow their rate of picking so as not to overpick the quotas established by the canneries, and second, workers were not eager to continue picking through the heat of the afternoon unless it was necessary in order to save the fruit.

Table 20.—Average hours of work per day of workers in the peach harvest by operation and major producing area, California, August-September 1945.

Operation and type of worker	Average hours of work per day		
	Tulare-Fresno area	Stanislaus area	Sutter area
<u>Picking</u>			
All workers	8.8	9.0	7.8
<u>White, non-Mexican extraction</u>			
Hourly basis	8.9	9.5	9.0
Piece rate	-	9.0	7.4
<u>Local Mexican</u>			
Piece rate	8.8	-	7.9
<u>Mexican National</u>			
Hourly basis	9.9	9.1	10.0
Piece rate	-	9.0	5.7
<u>Nonwhite</u>			
-	-	9.0	8.1
<u>Cutting</u>			
-	8.5	-	7.0
<u>Dry Yard work</u>			
-	9.0	-	-
<u>Loading</u>			
-	14.4	-	9.9
<u>Supervising</u>			
-	9.2	10.3	9.9

Performance.—Output per worker engaged in peach picking depends on a number of factors, most important of which are yield, size of the fruit, height of the trees, and proportion of scabby or defective fruit that must be dropped to the ground. Yield, size and quality of fruit were all conducive to high performance rates in the 1945 season.



Table 21.—Performance per hour and per day of piece-rate workers in the peach harvest, by major producing area and type of worker, California, August - September 1945.

Operation, area and type of worker	: Number of: workers	Boxes handled	
		: Per hour	: Per day
<u>Picking</u>			
<u>Stanislaus area</u>			
White, non-Mexican extraction	238	10.7	96.9
Male	232	10.7	96.9
Female	6	-	-
Mexican National	22	10.9	98.3
Jamaican	8	-	-
<u>Sutter area</u>			
Whites, non-Mexican extraction	756	9.9	72.8
Male	546	10.4	76.5
Female	210	8.6	63.3
Local Mexican	78	7.8	61.9
Mexican National	22	11.4	65.2
Nonwhites	97	10.5	85.4
<u>Cutting</u>			
Tulare-Fresno area	103	4.7	39.7
Sutter area	24	3.7	25.9

In the Stanislaus area the average output per picker paid piece rates was 10.7 boxes per hour. Mexican Nationals who worked at piece rates had the highest average, 10.9 boxes, and the white women of non-Mexican extraction had the lowest, 10.1 boxes. Output per day varied correspondingly, from 91.3 to 98.3 boxes (table 21).

In the Sutter area the pickers averaged 9.8 boxes per hour. The white workers of non-Mexican extraction averaged 9.9 boxes, the men 10.4 and the women 8.6. Local Mexicans, however, averaged 7.8 boxes, the nonwhites 10.5, and the Mexican Nationals 11.4. No check was made to ascertain why performance rates were slightly higher in the Stanislaus area. The present study indicates, however, that the higher the proportion of women pickers in the Sutter area was partially responsible.

Peach cutters in the Tulare-Fresno area averaged 4.7 boxes per hour and 39.7 per day, while those in the Sutter area averaged 3.7 boxes per hour and 25.9 per day. Cutting rates usually depended on the size and quality of the fruit. In this particular case the higher performance in the Tulare-Fresno area was caused by the fact that most of the workers were adult women, while those in the Sutter district were largely boys and girls 12 to 15 years of age.

Earnings.—Earnings at hourly rates were significantly lower than at piece rates. Average daily earnings of pickers paid hourly rates ranged from \$7.40 for local Mexicans in the Tulare-Fresno area to \$8.50 for other whites of non-Mexican extraction in the Stanislaus area. Only 2 crews worked at piece rates in the Tulare-Fresno area, and they earned an average of \$9.50 per man per day. White male pickers of non-Mexican extraction at piece rates in the Stanislaus area earned \$12.50 in a 9-hour day, or an average of \$1.38 an hour. The women pickers earned \$12.00 in the same time, or an average of \$1.33 an hour (table 22).

Table 22.—Average earnings of workers in the peach harvest by operation and major producing area, California, August - September, 1945.

Operation and type of worker	: Tulare- : Fresno area		: Stanislaus : area		: Sutter : area	
	: Per	: Per	: Per	: Per	: Per	: Per
	: hour	: day	: hour	: day	: hour	: day
<u>Picking</u>						
All workers	\$.84	\$7.40	\$1.24	\$11.30	\$1.17	\$9.10
<u>White, non-Mexican extraction</u>						
Hourly basis	.83	7.40	.90	8.50	.67	6.00
Piece rate	-	9.50	1.38	12.50	1.25	9.20
<u>Local Mexican</u>						
Piece rate	.84	7.40	-	-	1.00	8.00
<u>Mexican National</u>						
Hourly basis	.75	7.40	.85	7.70	.70	7.10
Piece rate	-	-	1.41	12.70	1.37	7.80
<u>Nonwhite</u>	-	-	1.23	11.10	1.37	11.10
<u>Cutting</u>	.70	6.00	-	-	.60	4.20
<u>Dry yard work</u>	.89	8.10	-	-	-	-
<u>Loading</u>	.85	11.50	-	-	.82	8.10
<u>Supervising</u>	.92	8.40	1.29	13.30	.98	9.70

In the Sutter area, piece-rate pickers earned an average of \$1.24 an hour and \$9.20 a day. White worker of non-Mexican extraction averaged \$1.25 an hour and local Mexicans \$1.00.

Quite as significant was the difference in earnings between workers who picked peaches and those who cut them. The latter type of work is commonly performed by women and children in the shade of a cutting shed and is regarded as less difficult work than picking.

Greatest disparity in earnings was in the Sutter area. While the pickers were earning \$1.15 an hour the cutters averaged only 60 cents. Adult cutters averaged 86 cents an hour, however, while the 12-year-old children averaged only 29 cents.



Earnings were significantly higher in the Stanislaus and Sutter areas than in the Tulare-Fresno district. This is in accord with the usual wage rate and earnings pattern in the State. In general, wage rates and earnings increase with distance from the Mexican border. In the Tulare-Fresno area 74 percent of the peach pickers made less than \$7.50 a day, whereas none of those in the Stanislaus area earned that small an amount and only 13 percent of those in the Sutter area (table 23). Only 5 percent of the pickers in the Tulare-Fresno area earned over \$9.00 a day as compared to 74 percent in the Stanislaus area, and 76 percent in the Sutter area.

Table 23.--Daily earnings of workers in the peach harvest by operation and major producing area, California, August - September 1945.

Operation and earnings	Tulare-Fresno area		Stanislaus area		Sutter area	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Picking</u>						
All workers	885	100	354	100	1,806	100
Under \$7.50	655	74	-	0	236	13
\$7.50 - 8.99	187	21	91	26	206	11
\$9.00 and over	43	5	263	74	1,364	76
<u>Cutting</u>						
All workers	103	100	-	-	24	100
Under \$5.00	20	20	-	-	24	100
\$5.00 - 6.99	63	61	-	-	-	-
\$7.00 and over	20	19	-	-	-	-
<u>Dry yard work</u>						
All workers	59	100	-	-	-	-
Under \$7.50	13	22	-	-	-	-
\$7.50 - 8.99	33	56	-	-	-	-
\$9.00 and over	13	22	-	-	-	-
<u>Supervising</u>						
All workers	18	100	4	100	8	100
Under \$8.00	3	17	-	-	1	13
\$8.00 - 9.99	14	78	1	25	1	12
\$10.00 and over	1	5	3	75	6	75

Perquisites.--Workers in the peach harvest in California ordinarily live in camps maintained by private individuals or simply pitch a tent in the orchard in which they are going to work. Other workers live in WFA Farm Labor Supply Centers or in camps maintained by the California Farm Production Council or some other public or semi-public agency. The harvest season is so short that farm operators do not feel they would be justified financially in erecting cabins to be used only a few weeks in the year. Hence if they furnish anything it is limited to camping space, drinking water and sanitary facilities.

When located near urban areas, growers frequently drive to town daily and pick up a crew of workers. This has become more common during the war period as many workers no longer have means of transportation of their own.

Mexican Nationals have received more perquisites than is usual for workers in this harvest. Growers either had to furnish them housing or keep them in community camps and transport them to and from work daily (table 24). The latter was most common in the Modesto area. The workers were transported to and from Modesto or other towns daily. Only a few were furnished lodging. In the Sutter area it was more common to provide some type of lodging.

Table 24.--Number and proportion of workers in the peach harvest who received various types of perquisites, by operation, area, and type of worker, California, 1945.

Operation and type of worker	: Tulare-Fresno :		Stanislaus :		Sutter	
	: area :		area		area	
	: Number:Percent:		Number:Percent:		Number:Percent:	
	workers	workers	workers	workers	workers	workers
	:receiv-	:receiv-	:receiv-	:receiv-	:receiv-	:receiv-
	:ing	:ing	:ing	:ing	:ing	:ing
<u>Picking</u>						
<u>White, non-Mexican extraction</u>						
Lodging	-	-	-	-	39	5
Transportation	54	18	25	10	18	2
<u>Local Mexican</u>						
Lodging	19	4	-	-	-	-
Transportation	465	89	-	-	20	24
<u>Mexican National</u>						
Lodging	21	100	99	100	129	100
Transportation	21	100	92	92	129	100
<u>Cutting</u>						
Transportation	49	48	-	-	-	-
<u>Dry yard work</u>						
House	4	7	-	-	-	-
Transportation	3	5	-	-	-	-

Methods of sampling.--In the Tulare-Fresno area 20 shippers handle 90 percent of the peaches that are shipped by rail to eastern markets. Peaches are also shipped by truck to the local markets on the Pacific Coast, but this movement is less well organized and no attempt was made to obtain a sample from it. Most of the shippers maintain their own picking crews, the others know which of their growers are picking during any particular week.



A list of these shippers was made, first in geographical sequence from north to south by shipping point, and second in alphabetical order for each shipping point. It was decided to enumerate all pickers working for every other firm beginning with the second one on the lists. In case the pickers were employed directly by the growers rather than by the shipper, the reports were to be obtained from the growers. Enumeration was also to be made of any cutting crews hired by the growers in the sample.

A different sampling procedure was followed in the other two areas, as data had to be obtained directly from the growers and no current list of growers' names was available. The concentrated peach production area in Stanislaus County was divided into 62 blocks containing approximately the same number of operators as indicated by a detailed road map. The enumerator was required to contact one grower in each of 50 of these blocks and to enumerate all members of his picking crew. This resulted in approximately a 10 percent sample.

In the Sutter area the sampling was also done on a geographical basis. The roads in the concentrated peach district were marked off into a total of 133 blocks and the enumerators instructed to obtain a report in each block, or in a group of blocks in those areas in which all operators were not peach growers. This amounted to a sample of 75 growers, spread widely over the area and employing approximately 20 percent of the pickers.

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